

Fifty days ago, I would have hoped today -- World Oceans Day -- to call for a renewed commitment to protecting our most majestic resource: our oceans. I could have reminisced about my own memories on the Oregon coast and around the world, and the shared human experiences of being transfixed by the water and the ebb and flow of the tides. I would have called to redouble our efforts again to stop global warming pollution, which impacts not just human health but the health of our planet.

While these sentiments still ring true, they also ring hollow in light of the BP disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, where oil is silently and swiftly damaging an underwater world and making its way onto our shores. From Louisiana to Florida, and who knows where else given the potential of loop currents to carry this "sweet crude" up the Eastern seaboard. The world is witnessing firsthand another consequence of our addiction to fossil fuels.

The devastating images of oil-coated wildlife are jarring reminders of what is at stake if we do not transition from dirty fuels towards clean, renewable energy sources. We must redouble our efforts for energy that will not spill into the oceans, exacerbate ocean acidification, or threaten human health.

Fifty days into the BP disaster, and on this World Oceans Day, we must all be recommitted to congressional action that will hold BP accountable, lift the liability caps, and ensure BP pays for the damage inflicted on workers, the environment and coastal economies.

This week, the Senate must show its commitment to clean energy by voting against Murkowski's brazen attempt to tie the hands of EPA. She must not prevail in preventing EPA from regulating global warming pollution, which even this Supreme Court ruled a threat to public health.

Their next step should be following the House leadership with the American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES), by enacting energy and climate legislation of their own -- and doing so quickly.

Big Oil's interests run as deep as the leak in the Gulf, and if we've learned anything over the last fifty days, it's that BP (remember Beyond Petroleum?) and others in the industry are interested less in our communities, oceans, worker safety and the environment than their bottom line.

For the members of Congress who have consistently voted in favor of oil and industry, I hope the catastrophic spectacle in the Gulf will help them reevaluate their policy to set America on the path to a clean energy future.

We must succeed so that the next World Oceans Day becomes a day for celebration.